



SOMEBODY SPECIAL

We may never have met, but I know you are special. I know it because someone thought enough of you to share these lessons with you. I also know it because you had enough interest in spiritual matters to pick up this publication and start reading. In a world where most are interested only in the here-and-now, this makes you very special indeed!

You may wonder, "What is this about, anyway?" The title is "Everyman's Guide to Salvation"; it is a serious Bible study on the subject of eternal salvation.

You probably studied many subjects at school—reading, arithmetic, history—but you will never study a subject more important than salvation. If there is a God (and most people believe He exists), and if there is a heaven (most even believe there is life after death), then it is vitally important for us to know how to please God now and how to go to heaven when we die.

To keep us focused, let me state the purpose of our study like this:

GOAL: ETERNAL LIFE

We will not be able to study all that the Bible has to say about everything. Our study will focus on how to become a Christian, how to please God now, and how to be sure you will live with God eternally.

We will use the Bible to find answers, because the only way we can really know how to please God is to go to His Book. While we all have our own ideas about religion, the important thing is not what you or I think, but what the Bible says.

Since this is a Bible study, we will be looking at many Scriptures. I will be using the updated edition of the New American Standard Bible. Some verses will be quoted, while others will merely be mentioned. Check out every passage in your own Bible. If you use a different translation,¹ the words may be a little different; but as long as you have a reliable translation of the Bible, they will basically mean the same thing. As we study together, you will encounter references to several widely used translations, such as the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), and the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

If Bible study is new to you, you can use the table of contents in the front of your Bible to find the different books. When you see a reference like "2 Peter 3:15, 16," "2 Peter" is the name of the book, with the number before the colon indicating the chapter number and the number(s) after the colon identifying the verse(s). Occasionally, you will even see a letter given in the verse number; for example, "vv. 15b, 16" would mean to begin reading with the second phrase in verse 15 and continue through all of verse 16. (Verses are not always divided according to complete sentences.)

After you have read a passage, read the verses before and after it. It is possible to isolate verses and make them appear to teach something they do not. We would not want that to happen! (Second Peter 3:15, 16 speaks of distorting the Scriptures.)

Do not think of this as a printed talk, but as a personal study. I have approached the writing as a one-on-one study. Read with a pen or pencil in hand:

- When you read something that you think is significant, mark it.
- When you disagree with a thought, make a note to that effect.
- When you have a question, write it in the margin.

After you finish a section, contact the friend who gave you this publication. (His² name and address or phone number may be written on the cover.) When you get together with him, share your notes and ask your questions. Never hesitate to ask questions. Questions do not make you look foolish; questions show that you have been thinking.

Occasionally, when you have a question, you may be asked to read some more. The answer may be found in a later lesson—or you may need additional background to understand the answer when it is given. Be assured that your questions are important and that eventually an attempt will be made to answer each one.

Before we begin our study, please fill out the questionnaire below. This will help your friend to know you better. Also, we will refer to this form in a later lesson. If you are not sure what information is desired, do the best you can. Add explanatory comments if you wish. Thanks!

As we study, I pray that God will bless us all.
David Roper

<p>Name _____</p> <p>1. When I was saved: _____</p> <p>2. How much later, after I was saved, before I was baptized: _____</p> <p>3. The confession I made before I was baptized: _____</p> <p>4. The reason I was baptized: _____</p> <p>5. How I was baptized (sprinkled, water poured on, or immersed): _____</p> <p>Additional Notes/Questions: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

¹Most of the Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language, while the New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. (“Koine” means “common”; Koine Greek was the Greek spoken by the average person at the time when the New Testament was being written.) The Bible has been translated into many languages. Many people have the English translation called the King James Version (also called the Common or Authorized Version) of 1611. Others prefer more up-to-date versions which use more familiar words. (The endnotes following these lessons have a twofold purpose: [1] to explain terms and [2] to give additional information. If you are comfortable with what you have read, there is no need to check the endnotes.)

²I do not know whether a man or a woman gave you this publication. When referring to this friend, I will usually use the masculine pronoun to avoid the awkward repetition of “he or she.” In other words, most of the time I will use the masculine gender in a generic sense.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK ALONG THE WAY

Who is “the apostle Paul”?

Paul was originally known as “Saul.” He was a Jew, zealous of the law of Moses (Philippians 3:5, 6). After the establishment of the church, he became a persecutor of Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 2). The story of his conversion is found in three chapters of Acts: 9, 22, and 26. He was commissioned by Christ to be an apostle (Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1) with a special mission to the Gentiles, or non-Jews (Acts 9:15; Romans 11:13; 1 Timothy 2:7). He was the author of more than half of the books of the New Testament (from Romans to Philemon—and perhaps Hebrews).

Does it make any difference what Paul and other inspired writers said or wrote?

Yes! The entire New Testament is the new covenant of *Jesus*: both what Christ personally said and what He said through inspired men. Before Jesus’ death, He told His apostles that the Holy Spirit would be sent to help them remember all He had taught them (John 14:26; see John 16:13). Paul and others were guided by the Spirit in what they taught (see 1 Corinthians 2:12, 13). Read what Jesus said in Matthew 10:40. If you reject the teaching of the apostles, you are rejecting Jesus Himself—and you are rejecting God.

What is the “Great Commission”?

This is the usual way of referring to the final instructions given by Jesus to His followers before His ascension (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15, 16; see Luke 24:46, 47). The Great Commission is to preach the gospel of Christ to every person in every nation in “all the world.”